



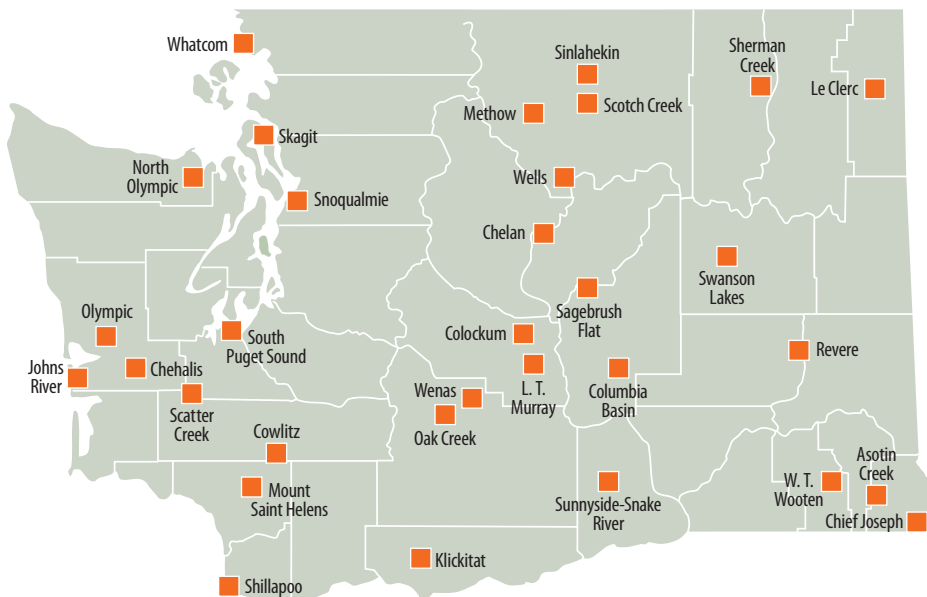
Strategic Land Acquisition & Sound Stewardship: Conserving Lands for Fish, Wildlife and People

**“We acquire lands that provide
the highest benefit to fish, wildlife
and the public, and only where we
have broad public support
and willing sellers”**

**Phil Anderson,
WDFW Director**

Washington’s population has more than quadrupled in the past 80 years, from 1.5 million in 1930 to 6.7 million today, reducing fish and wildlife habitat to a fraction of what existed in the early 1900s. The purchase of wildlife lands provides vital defense against the state’s loss of critical habitat and species, and has become – with broad public support – one of the department’s most successful conservation tools. Proper land management is just as critical. By providing science-based tools, assessments and technical assistance, the agency guides management practices that conserve these important resource values. Together, strategic acquisition and sound management ensures the agency’s dual mission – to preserve, protect and perpetuate the state’s fish and wildlife species, and to provide sustainable fishing, hunting and wildlife-related recreation opportunities.

32 wildlife areas attract 4 million visitors per year



History of WDFW Lands Portfolio

- 1933 Department of Game established
- 1939 First purchase – 80 acres of mule deer winter range in Sinlahekin
- 1940-70 Land portfolio grows to 340,000, supported by federal conservation legislation
- 1970-90 Slower growth – up to 400,000 acres in 1990
- 1990 Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program established
- 2012 900,000 acres (2% of the state)
700+ water access sites

LAND ACQUISITION

Land Acquisition Priorities

- **Conserve fish and wildlife**
- **Provide opportunities for wildlife-related recreation**
- **Conserve lands with long-term ecological value**
- **Meet goals of conservation partners**
- **Preserve community character and values**

Acquisitions are selective and strategic

WDFW undergoes a rigorous process to decide if agency ownership is the best choice. Local community support is essential, as is the application of science-based tools to determine lands suitable for habitat and wildlife needs. In addition to extensive internal review by executive managers and technical staff, acquisition decisions are made with favorable input from local governments, and citizen advisory groups.

Partnering essential to conserve healthy habitats

Collaboration with partners advances WDFW ability to preserve landscapes crucial for fish and wildlife and outdoor recreation. Partners include:

- The Nature Conservancy
- Local land conservancies and councils
- Conservation Northwest
- Ducks Unlimited
- Trust for Public Land
- Doris Duke Foundation
- Mule Deer Foundation
- Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
- Wilderness Society

As an example, collaboration with the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation (RMEF) and The Nature Conservancy (TNC) led to WDFW's acquiring 10,000 acres of diverse wildlife habitat in Kittitas County. Known as the "Heart of the Cascades", the property supports many federal- and state-protected species, including spotted owls, bull trout and steelhead, as well as many game species, including elk, bighorn sheep and mountain goats.



Purchase price set through equitable process

WDFW makes purchase offers at fair market value, as determined by certified third-party appraisers, meeting internal appraisal and funding source standards. Most importantly, the agency develops agreements based on private landowner choice for fee acquisition, conservation easement, or both.

State conservation funds are provided through and coordinated by the state Recreation and Conservation Office, while federal funds come primarily from the US Fish and Wildlife Service. Fund sources include:

- Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program
- Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account
- Salmon Recovery Funding Board
- Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund "Section 6"
- National Coastal Wetlands Act
- North America Wetlands Conservation Act

"The Heart of the Cascades project is a classic example of a true partnership, where the whole is more than the sum of its parts. None of us – Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, The Nature Conservancy, WDFW – could have done it on our own."

Rance Block, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation



WDFW LAND STEWARDSHIP AND PRIVATE CONSERVATION PARTNERS

Land management promotes conservation values

The WDFW Lands Division is responsible for land purchases, conservation easements and property management. Its annual budget of \$12 million comes from various state and federal sources, including the new state Discover Pass.

The department's land management activities include:

- **Habitat, fish and wildlife stewardship activities** such as weed control, habitat restoration and forest thinning.
- **Facility development and maintenance** including roads, buildings, fences, boat launches, trails, gates, cattle guards, campgrounds, toilets and water control structures.
- **Recreation management** including litter control, public safety, tours, signs, and public education and information.
- **Working lands partnerships** with local ranchers and farmers, who lease WDFW property and provide habitat maintenance and crop raising for wildlife and weed control.

Capital budget supports new facilities

The state capital budget provides about \$7 million per year for boat ramp replacements, bird-watching blinds, fishing piers, restrooms, road and bridge repairs, and facilities for people with disabilities.

Private landowners protect lands too

The department does not have the resources or desire to acquire all important fish and wildlife habitat. Many lands are protected by local governments, conservation organizations and conscientious landowners.

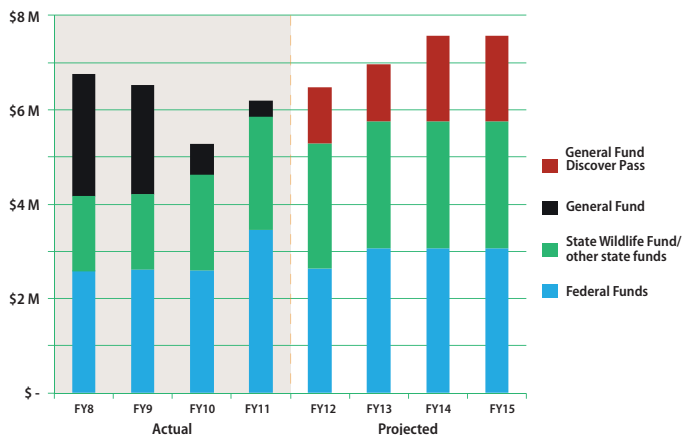
The department has management contracts with many private landowners who maintain about 1 million acres to support state conservation goals and provide outdoor recreation opportunities. For example:

- More than 600 private landowners work with the department to allow hunting and fishing access on their property.
- The department has purchased conservation easements to enable the preservation of about 17,000 acres of privately owned fish and wildlife habitat. Private landowners maintain their ownership, and the local tax base is preserved.
- Over 100,000 acres of farmlands are enrolled in the federal Farm Bill program, which reimburses farmers who "grow habitat" in place of wheat or other crops.

"My family has a strong working relationship with the WDFW. They provide us with the assistance we need to conserve our way of life and wildlife habitat. These strong working relationships are key to the maintenance and function of wildlife conservation on private lands."

Richard Rice, Douglas County landowner

Primary Lands Division Operating and Maintenance Funds



How does the public benefit from sound land acquisition and stewardship practices?

Supporting Local Economies

WDFW lands provide an abundance of recreation opportunities, which generate 4.5 billion annually and support more than 60,000 jobs statewide. Most of these jobs are in rural communities, where restaurants, motels, gas stations and convenience stores rely on outdoor recreation. In addition, there are over 600 license dealers in the state, accounting for 1.4 million in-store visits, where customers spend an average of \$25-50 more on additional retail items.

“Local fishing and hunting is totally our business and our sales correlate directly with seasonal participation.”

Darcy Linklater, co-owner with wife Verna
Darver Tackle Shop, “Best ‘Lil Tackle Shop by a Dam
Site” Little Goose Dam on Snake River, Starbuck

**Conservation easement in Okanogan
County preserves working lands and
protects them from future development**

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Supporting Local Governments

WDFW paid nearly \$1 million to Washington counties in 2012 through Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) and in assessments for weed control, lake management, fire protection, irrigation and storm water management activities undertaken by local government. PILT payments make up for the loss of tax revenue to local governments when land is transferred from a private to a public entity.

Supporting a Healthy Environment

WDFW's conservation practices keep natural areas free from water, air and ground pollution, make them publicly accessible, and contribute to the overall quality of life of all Washington residents and visitors.

